

the floor, offer those amendments, and let's debate them. If we can agree to them, we will recommend that to the Senate. We appreciate very much the cooperation and assistance of all Senators who have been helpful to us in this effort.

1998 LOUISIANA DROUGHT AND CROP DISASTER

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I call to the Senate's attention the serious and significant drought which has occurred in Louisiana this year. The combination of a prolonged lack of rainfall and persistent high temperatures have resulted in a natural disaster of historic proportions. For those affected, damages have been hard-hitting.

As we debate the 1999 agricultural appropriations bill and amendments to it which respond to severe agricultural distress throughout the nation this year, caused by weather-related damages and low commodity prices, I urge my colleagues to keep in mind the situation in Louisiana.

On June 18 of this year, Governor M.J. "Mike" Foster and Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry Bob Odom wrote to Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman about the drought in Louisiana.

Though adequate production records were not yet available at the time of their letter, Governor Foster and Commissioner Odom told Secretary Glickman substantial losses were expected in the state and that they expected to be requesting a disaster declaration as soon as adequate production information could be obtained.

Various row crops and pine and hardwood seedlings have been affected in Louisiana by the drought, they said. Cattle have been affected because of severe hay and pasture shortages. Poultry losses also have occurred due to the high temperatures.

Illustrative of the drought's historic character, they pointed out that records have been set for the least amount of rainfall received in the month of May, with rainfall records going back more than 100 years.

Though Congressionally-authorized programs are in place at USDA to respond to disasters, I urge the Senate to be prepared to respond further and promptly as conditions and impacts would worsen.

Mr. President, we know that production disruptions brought about by the drought will cause economic disruptions for producers. In addition, the communities in which our producers live also will be affected. It is for these reasons that I urge close attention to crop disasters and low prices and a readiness to act as warranted.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, earlier today I voted for Senator GRASSLEY's Sense of the Senate amendment that urges prompt action on a number of trade, tax, and regulatory issues in order to help the American farm community. I think our farmers are experiencing serious problems, and I believe that prompt action on many of the initiatives contained in the

Grassley amendment will help expand U.S. agricultural export markets and improve farm profits.

The amendment Senator GRASSLEY put before the Senate recommended that the Senate act on S. 2078, the Farm Ranch Risk Management Act, which I have cosponsored. It urges action to provide full funding for the International Monetary Fund; I believe action to increase the capital of the IMF is essential to address the economic crisis in Asia and the current situation in Russia, both of which have enormous impacts on U.S. agriculture. It urges Congressional approval legislation to continue normal trading relations with China, which I also support. It calls for estate tax reform, reduced regulations on farmers, and use of the Commodity Credit Corporation and Export Enhancement Program at the Department of Agriculture, all of which are worthy of prompt attention by the Senate.

Notwithstanding my support for the general objective of Senator GRASSLEY's amendment, however, I do have one major reservation concerning his amendment, and that has to do with fast-track trade negotiating authority.

Senator GRASSLEY's amendment urges providing the President with new fast-track negotiating authority. I oppose giving the President that authority at this time, for both practical and philosophical reasons. As a practical matter, fast-track, and any agreements it might ultimately lead to, will only provide benefits to American agriculture in the distant future, not in the near term. In fact, the only possible trade agreement on the horizon is with Chile, and that agreement, even if it were put into place tomorrow, would be unlikely to have any significant impact on the economic health of American agriculture.

Moreover, granting the President fast-track authority is not currently warranted because of the total lack of consensus on American trade policy for the future. Large parts of the rest of the world cannot discern any consistent set of underlying principles governing U.S. trade policy decisions. Congress and the Administration have not come to an agreement on a trade policy framework, and in the absence of that framework, decisions are all too often made on an ad hoc basis.

Granting the President fast-track authority requires the Congress to delegate much of the trade authority given the legislative branch by our Constitution to the President. It is no less a delegation of Congressional authority than the line-item veto. Fast track is therefore an issue of the utmost importance institutionally and Constitutionally to the Congress. In the absence of real consensus on trade policy within both the executive branch and the Congress, I cannot and do not support this kind of diminution of Congressional authority over trade.

My support for the general objectives of the Grassley amendment does not

represent any change in my view of the fast-track issue. In the absence of a consensus on a new trade policy architecture that includes not only the Congress and the President, but also American agriculture, labor, the business community, and the American people generally, I oppose providing the President with new fast-track negotiating authority.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I voted for the Grassley sense of the Senate amendment to the Agriculture Appropriations bill because I support nine of its ten provisions.

I do not support the provision stating that we should enact the bill S. 1269, which reauthorizes fast-track trading authority for the President.

It is premature and disruptive to endorse fast-track legislation now, before resolving questions about its effect on jobs and the environment. These are very controversial and complicated problems, and so far we have not figured out how to deal with them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as if in morning business for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TEAMSTERS UNION ELECTIONS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I want to bring to the attention of the body an issue which is percolating under the surface as we move toward the end of this week; that is, the question of the financing of the Teamsters Union elections which were financed by tax dollars, and which elections may be held again for which there has been a request to finance them again with tax dollars.

The last time we went down this road, the Teamsters Union ran an election which was overseen by the U.S. attorney in New York with the assistance of the Justice Department. And the U.S. Marshals I believe were also involved in it. The taxpayers of this country spent \$17 million to oversee this election. The election was then reviewed. It was determined that the election had been fraudulently run, that it had corruptly proceeded, and that it was basically an election which had to be voided by the Federal judge who was overseeing the election.

So for the \$17 million of tax money which we invested in order to get a fair and honest election in the Teamsters

Union, the taxpayers got a dishonest, corrupt, and fraudulent election.

That is bad enough. What is even worse is that the taxpayers had to pay in the first place to oversee a union election.

This is the largest union in the United States, I believe, relative to membership. It is a very wealthy union. It is obviously a union which has had some significant problems over the years, both with its leadership and with the management, and especially with its pension funds for its rank and file. But it clearly is a union which has the financial strength to pay the cost of oversight of its elections to assure that the rank-and-file membership of the union get a fair and honest election.

I personally felt sorry for the membership of the Teamsters Union which has been put through this election which has been so fraudulently managed. But I also think that the taxpayers have to be concerned. We have to be concerned about the taxpayers. Why should the taxpayers of this country be asked to pay for the cost of overseeing a union election for a union which is so wealthy? Clearly, for any oversight that occurs, the cost should be borne by the union itself. I should think it would want to in order to obtain an honest and fair election. But no, that didn't happen.

In the last election, the taxpayers came up with \$17 million, which was clearly wasted. Have we been reimbursed for that? Have the taxpayers been reimbursed for that \$17 million? No, we haven't. I realize that in Washington \$17 million seems like a meager sum, but I have to tell you, it is a lot of money.

There are a lot of people in New Hampshire both who are union members and who are nonunion members, who work very hard and who work all year long to pay their taxes. And if you were to add up their taxes, you would find it didn't meet \$17 million. I suspect that is probably for 5,000 or 6,000 people in the State of New Hampshire the tax burden for a year. I am not sure. That is a guess. But I suspect it is a large number of people who work all year paying their taxes so they can be put into this union election, which is then fraudulently run. And we didn't get the money back.

Now they come to us again. They say, "We need another—we don't know what the final figure might be." But initially they need another \$8 million of tax money in order to run this second election. Fool me once, and it is your fault. Fool me twice, and it is my fault. Clearly, it is the taxpayer who is being taken down the road. If the Congress allows this to happen again, it is the Congress that is being taken down the road, and as a result we are not carrying out our obligation to support the taxpayers.

So for us to pay another \$8 million—it may end up being much more than that. It may be \$20 million in order to

support another union election after we haven't been reimbursed for the \$17 million we spent in the last election, which was basically totally mismanaged. It is inconceivable. It is inappropriate. It makes no sense. Fortunately, that is my view. Unfortunately, there are a number of people around here who have a different view.

The White House wants us to spend this money. The Justice Department wants us to spend this money. The Speaker of the House wants to spend, I guess, this money. A number of Members of our own body want to spend this money. But to get this money, they have to, at least in theory, come to the committee that I chair and get me to authorize and reprogram to do it.

I want to go on record as to why I am not doing it. I am not going to reauthorize that reprogram because I am not going to go back to New Hampshire and be walking through a factory somewhere, or on a farm somewhere, or in a small software company somewhere, and have one of my constituents come up to me and say, "You know, last year I paid X dollars in taxes, and you just sent it to run a corrupt election for the Teamsters. What are you doing with my money? Aren't you supposed to be taking care of that money down there? Aren't you supposed to be my fiduciary? Aren't you supposed to be overseeing it so it doesn't get wasted?"

If I approve this transfer, my answer to them would have to be, I am not doing my job, that I am not fulfilling my obligation to protect the taxpayers from the fraudulent misuse of their funds.

The Teamsters Union has the financial wherewithal to pay the cost of overseeing its own elections. The last election was such an abysmal failure from the standpoint of integrity, from the standpoint of appropriateness of an election process, that it is absolutely inexcusable that the Court, that the Justice Department, that the White House, or that anyone else would come to us again and say, Taxpayers, we are going to go down this road one more time. We are going to take you on this ride one more time. We are going to spend your money one more time to run another election for a union which has proven itself to be so corrupt in the manner in which it runs elections." It is just beyond my comprehension how we can pursue that course of action. But that seems to be the desire of a number of members in this body and a number of members of the other body, of the White House and of the leadership of the Justice Department. However, if they are going to do it, they are going to do it without my support, and I will do everything I can in this body to make sure that those tax dollars are not spent in this way.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. President I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from West Virginia.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT COMPROMISE

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, today marks the 211th anniversary of one of the more momentous, but little-understood, perhaps, events in our country's history. I will just take a few minutes to remind ourselves of that event and to consider just how the course of this Nation's history might have been forever altered if not for what transpired on July 16, 1787.

It should be of special significance to Members of this body, because it was, fortunately for us, that those who attended the Philadelphia Convention were some of the ablest, brightest figures of the time; in fact, of any time. Ah, Mr. President, to have been a fly on the wall at that gathering! Truly, this was a gathering graced by an accumulation—nay, an abundance—of wisdom, learning, grace, and dignity of a like not seen since the conclaves at Mt. Olympus! From Virginia alone, there were Washington, James Madison, George Mason, and Edmund Randolph; from Massachusetts, Elbridge Gerry and Rufus King; from Pennsylvania, James Wilson, Gouverneur Morris and Benjamin Franklin; and from New York, Hamilton. Here was a constitutional dream team for the ages! And what a starting five! What foe could resist a lineup featuring Wilson's full-court vision, Madison's patience and tactical prowess, Hamilton's aggressive offense, Franklin's experience, and George Washington's dominating presence in the center, as the one who presided over the gathering.

These five were just the tip of the iceberg. Fifty-five men in all presented themselves at the Convention, representing every State, save one—Rhode Island. And with passion and gusto they soon set about devising a plan to guide the country past the shoals and rocks and storms that beset it and into a new sea of tranquility and prosperity.

Nowadays, many of us overlook the tremendous physical and mental effort that were expended in drafting the Constitution. In reading this short document—here it is, I hold it in my hand—in reading this short document, with its precise and careful phrases, it is easy to forget the toil, the sweat, the frustration, the shouting, the argumentation, the thinking, speechifying, and the pleading that went into its creation during that hot Philadelphia summer. For progress was unavoidably slow, and the greatest sticking point—"the most threatening that was encountered in framing the Constitution," according to Madison—was the question of whether States should be